LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

NOTES OF THE MONTH — R. P. D.

NON-INTERVENTION — William Rust

T.U.C. — Arthur Horner

FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR — Vladimir Potemkin

ITALY — G. Giori

BRING IN THE TECHNICIANS — William Boyle

Ffamine IN INDIA — V. K. Krishna Menon

AUSTRALIAN LABOUR VICTORY — Bell Keats

TWO STRATEGIES

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Crisis of the War—Prime Minister's Speech—Conclusions for Action—Price of Delay—No United Strategy—Mr. Morrison and Mr. Churchill—From Casablanca to Quebec—Washington Retreat—"Experimental" Air Offensives—False Alternatives to Second Front—Illusions and Facts—Dangers of Prolonged War—Why Quebec Failed—Two Wars or One War—Premier's Quebec Broadcast—Doubtful Arguments—Strategy and Politics—Trades Union Congress—Why Southport Failed—Uncritical Illusions—Nazi Hopes—End Passivity.

ON September 21 the Prime Minister made his statement to Parliament after his return from Quebec and Washington. His statement has in no way diminished the urgency of the grave issue which now stands before the people of this country. In the longest speech which he has made since he took office he sought to explain why, in the third year of the British-Soviet Alliance, one and a half years after the Three Power Declaration for the Second Front in 1942, the Second Front has not yet been established even towards the close of the third quarter of 1943. The explanation covered no new ground; but the conclusions to be drawn from the speech as a whole confirm the negative indications of the outcome of Quebec, and reveal how serious is the crisis of the war which we have now reached. The issue of the fight for the Second Front is sharpened by Mr. Churchill's speech.

WHAT did the speech show? He admitted that the Second Front, the invasion in full force across the Channel, must be the main aim of Anglo-American strategy, and that all other fronts are subsidiary and not a substitute. He admitted that Britain and the United States now hold decisive superiority in men, arms, shipping and air mastery, and that the one obstacle which earlier in the year he had declared to be the sole remaining obstacle to be surmounted, the U-boat menace, had been held in check for the past four months. Why then delay? He could offer no justification save the old plea of the necessity for more time to prepare. He who had once acclaimed the demand for the Second Front as the voice of the nation now denounced the same demand as an uninstructed political agitation running counter to expert military knowledge—regardless of the fact that the Government's own military experts had concurred in the Three Power Declaration for the Second Front in 1942, and that the opposition to the Second Front emanated from the same political quarters which had supported Munich. The promises of Casablanca were passed over in silence. There was no recognition of the urgency of action alongside the advance of the Soviet offensive. While the references to the Second Front were vague and defensive, the only concrete perspective had reference to the long-term strategy of the air bombing offensive against Germany, and spoke of the possibility of establishing air domination over Germany during 1944—that is, the perspective of the long war which is the inevitable alternative to the Second Front during the present moment of opportunity.

THE conclusions from this speech need to be ruthlessly drawn. Every attempt will be made to present the formal recognition of the necessity for the Second Front, and the promises for an unspecified future date, as equivalent to action, and on these grounds to demand the cessation of the campaign. There could be no greater illusion than to allow the campaign to be lulled on these grounds. On the contrary, the campaign needs to be intensified. No promises for the future can be accepted as a substitute for present action. There is no question

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that the Second Front must sooner or later be established; the whole logic of the military situation and of the development of the war points to this eventual outcome. That is not the issue. The issue is: When? The issue is that the Second Front needs to be established now in the present moment of highest opportunity, alongside the advance of the Soviet offensive, in the midst of the present crisis of the Fascist camp, before Fascism has time to consolidate its shortened defences and make the eventual Second Front more costly, before the disintegrating forces have time to work to weaken the alliance or prepare dangerous alternative policies. This speeding of the Second Front can only be ensured by the most active campaigning and pressure. It was never more necessary for public opinion to awaken to the urgent realities of the present war situation.

JULY, August and the great part of September have passed. Gigantic events have taken place during these months, changing the face of the war. German Fascism has been passing through its severest crisis of the entire war, with the collapse and capitulation of Italy, the powerful advance of the Red Army, the unrest of all its satellites and the mounting superiority of Allied arms. Have the opportunities of this crisis been utilised to the full? Are they being utilised to-day? Or are they being sacrificed in favour of an alternative semi-detached strategy of the Western Powers, which means, in practice, as its official spokesmen openly proclaim, a prolonged and costly war? Must the record of 1943 reveal that the most favourable opportunity for speedy victory was thrown away in favour of such a prolonged and costly war? This is the life-and-death question which is now posed before the British and American peoples. On the answer to this question the shape of the future depends, not only for victory in the war, but for the character of the world after the war.

WHAT is the Anglo-American strategy determined at Quebec, as revealed in the public declarations, the speeches of President Roosevelt and the Prime Minister, and in action? It is necessary to speak of "Anglo-American strategy," because there is not yet a coalition strategy of the United Nations. It is true that all the actions of all the Allies against the common enemy, in every sphere, whether principal or secondary, have a mutually beneficial effect and strengthen one another. But this is not yet the same thing as a single coalition strategy. Mr. Morrison, in his speech in the Isle of Man on August 26, roundly declared:—

> The pressure of the Russian Army on the Eastern flank, the pressure of the Anglo-American thrust from the South, and the weight of the Anglo-American air attack on the German war machine, are all carefully co-ordinated in one grand strategic concept. You may rest assured that there is but one single pattern in the whole of the Allied strategy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Churchill gave him the lie in less than a week, in his broadcast from Quebec on August 31, when he openly declared that there is not agreement between the Anglo-American and the Soviet conceptions of the strategy of the war:—

> It is quite natural that the Russians, bearing the main weight of the German armies on their front, should urge us ceaselessly to undertake this task (a Second Front in Northern France), and should in no way conceal their complaints and even reproaches that we have not done it before. I do not blame them for what they say. . . . Nothing they could say in honest criticism of our strategy will be taken amiss by us.

THUS there is not yet a single and agreed coalition strategy of the United Nations. On the contrary, there is public and admitted divergence between the Governments, not on some minor question, but on the basic strategy of the war. This is one of the most dangerous symptoms of Quebec. The story of "one grand strategic concept," of "one single pattern in the whole of the Allied strategy," is a myth, conceived in the fer-

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tile brain of Mr. Morrison to soothe the alarms of public opinion and dish the critics according to the somewhat simple recipe, often favoured by the platform at Labour Conferences, of brazen assertion in defiance of the facts, but bearing no relation to objective reality. The real situation, revealed equally in Mr. Churchill's broadcast and in the divergence on the British-Soviet Trade Union Committee, is one that should cause alarm, and that should be burned into public consciousness in considering the present problems of the war.

WHAT does the present position mean? The alliance, whose unity is the condition of victory over Hitler, has still to be consolidated and made fully effective in action. The formal agreement of the tripartite declaration of May, 1942, for the Second Front, has given place at the moment to open division of opinion and separation of policy. It must be obvious to every sincere supporter of the United Nations that this is a situation of serious concern which we must strive unremittingly to overcome. The question of the Second Front is not some private factious controversy of partisans of this or that school of strategic thought. At bottom, it is the basic elementary issue of the necessity of a single coalition strategy of the alliance as the indispensable condition for the effective action and victory of any coalition.

IT is in the light of this overriding consideration of the urgent necessity of a single coalition strategy, no less than of the plain facts and opportunities of the new war situation since July, that we must judge the outcome of Quebec. Last month we surveyed the situation on the eve of Quebec and the responsibilities facing that conference. In order to estimate the outcome of Quebec, it will be worth while to recall very briefly the line of development since the Casablanca Conference in January.

CASABLANCA marked already a certain retreat from the level of the united Three-Power Declaration of May, 1942, which recognised the urgent necessity of the establishment of the Second Front in Europe in 1942. No such explicit declaration came from Casablanca. In place of the Three-Power Declaration, Casablanca marked already the public adoption of a separate Anglo-American strategy. Nevertheless, Casablanca did reaffirm the primary task of defeating Hitler as the indispensable preliminary to dealing with Japan, and Casablanca did publicly proclaim the objective of establishing a front which would "draw as much of the weight as possible off the Russian armies." The public communique declared:—

> The President and the Prime Minister realise to the full the enormous weight of the war which Russia is successfully bearing along her whole land front, and their prime object has been to draw as much of the weight as possible off the Russian armies by engaging the enemy as heavily as possible at the best selected positions.

Mr. Churchill further declared in his speech in Parliament on February 11:—

> The dominant aim which we set before ourselves at Casablanca was to engage the enemy's forces on land, sea and in the air on the largest possible scale and at the earliest possible moment. . . . We have to make the enemy burn and bleed in the same way as he is being made to burn and bleed along the whole Russian front.

"In the same way as he is being made to burn and bleed along the whole Russian front"—i.e., an Anglo-American front comparable in scale to the Soviet front. Mr. Churchill further emphasised that they were calling on their "military advisers and experts" for "more weight to be put into the attacks and more speed into their dates"—i.e., that they were prodding the experts.

WASHINGTON in May revealed the first signs of a new retreat. In his speech to Congress on May 19 Mr. Churchill explained that, whereas Casablanca had laid down that the defeat of Germany was the necessary prelimi-

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nary to the defeat of Japan, it had now been decided that operations should be conducted equally against Germany and against Japan. He further declared that attention would now be concentrated on the air bombing offensive against Germany:—

> Opinion, Mr. President, is divided as to whether the use of air power could by itself bring about the collapse in Germany or Italy.
>
> The experiment is well worth trying, so long as other measures are not excluded.

On the face of it, this would appear a curiously irresponsible statement for a decision on such a vital issue of strategy. Strategy is not an experiment in a laboratory, and decisions carry consequences which go considerably beyond the scope of a new addition to textbook knowledge or new data for the research student.

A BASIC decision on strategy cannot be experimental, since it necessarily carries with it consequential decisions for the entire disposition of forces, priorities and the organisation of war production, which preclude other alternatives and for a whole period cannot easily be changed anew. The so-called "experimental" decision is thus in practice final for the period of its currency, and during its currency the hour of destiny may strike and pass, or even the fate of a nation may be decided. If the outcome is a costly failure, lost opportunities or even a lost war, it is no use pleading that the strategy was "only an experiment." General Gamelin may have held the theory that the Maginot Line was an adequate defence of France and poohpoohed the rival theories of De Gaulle, who understood the new conditions of mechanised warfare. But even General Gamelin would not have ventured to argue that the adequacy of the Maginot Line for the defence of France was "an experiment worth trying."

IN fact, the authoritative evidence of General McNarney, Deputy Chief of Staff of the United States Army, before the Senate Military Affairs Committee on September 15 has now revealed that the Washington Conference in May "gave overriding priority to the combined bomber offensive against Germany," and that it was decided to cut personnel in other spheres for this purpose. Thus the decision was, in fact, taken to "try out" the highly dubious theory of the isolationist air bombing offensive as the supposed weapon of victory, a theory supported by no first-class strategic experts, but beloved by all reactionaries in Britain and the United States (Lord Londonderry's tenacious stand for air bombing will be remembered) as the supposed magic formula for Anglo-American superiority, compensating for military weakness, and especially acclaimed at the present time by all former Munichites, isolationists and opponents of the Second Front as the supposed alternative strategy. The decision to give priority to the independent air offensive necessarily carried consequences in the whole field of organisation of the war effort and war production, which are being felt in Britain to-day, and made it in effect equivalent to a rejection of the strategy of the Second Front in 1943. In this respect Quebec carried forward, rather than changed Washington.

THE results of the air offensive as the supposed independent weapon of victory have so far fallen short of the exaggerated expectations, despite the assiduous publicity of the Air Ministry, which carries the largest publicity staff of any Ministry. By September the President's personal adviser, Mr. Harry Hopkins, was compelled to admit that after all the intensive bombing German production had only been slowed down 10 per cent. It is sometimes claimed that the intensified air offensive, by destroying or drawing off the main part of Nazi air forces, has thereby materially assisted the Soviet offensive. Even this claim has only a limited degree of validity, which is a

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very long way from compensating for the absence of a Second Front. According to the estimate of the Military Correspondent of the *Evening Standard* on August 31, out of a total of 75,000 Nazi planes during the first four years of the war (15,000 at the outbreak of war in 1939 and 60,000 subsequently constructed) 20,000 have been destroyed in all theatres of war outside the Soviet Union and 40,000 in the Soviet Union. Thus also in the air the main war has been conducted in the Soviet Union. The extent of the air warfare in the Soviet Union is often under-estimated, precisely because it is auxiliary to the land warfare and not isolated. For example, in the Battle of Britain 2,400 Nazi planes were destroyed in ten weeks. In the nine weeks of the Soviet winter offensive, from November 19, 1942, to January 19, 1943, 3,500 Nazi planes were destroyed. In nine weeks of the Nazi Kursk offensive and Soviet summer offensive between July 5 and September 5, 1943, no less than 5,729 Nazi planes were destroyed. But this air warfare was auxiliary to the land warfare, which can alone be finally decisive to smash a land power such as Germany.

ALTHOUGH Washington thus heralded already the new turn in Anglo-American strategy, the speech of Mr. Churchill to Congress on May 19 still sounded the note of urgency and warned against the prolongation of the war as playing the game of the Axis:—

> There is one grave danger which will go along with us to the end. That danger is the undue prolongation of the war. No one can tell what new complications and perils might arise before five more years of war, and it is in the dragging out of war at enormous expense till the democracies are tired or bored or split that the main hope of Germany and Japan must now reside.

That warning is even more true to-day than when it was spoken; for it is obvious to-day that delay is already accentuating any grave issues at the basis of the alliance which it is essential to solve, and giving opportunities to hostile and disintegrating forces to pursue their manoeuvres. But that note was no longer sounded at Quebec, where the keynote of every official spokesman was the insistence on the "long, long war," which has become the official synonym for the rejection of the Second Front in 1943.

BUT between Washington and Quebec the whole face of the war changed. The crushing defeat of the powerfully organised and super-mechanised Nazi summer offensive, for the first time in the history of Nazi banditry; the colossal advance of the Soviet offensive; the conquest of Sicily; the fall of Mussolini and surging advance of the anti-Fascist national front in Italy; the rising struggle throughout Europe; the crisis of Fascism—all these revealed as never before that the moment had come for the decisive offensive in Europe with the full force of the alliance; that obsolete timetables and plans of hesitation and delay would need to be radically revised in the light of the new facts of the war situation; that victory in 1943 was within the grasp of the peoples—provided the Anglo-American decisions of Quebec responded to the opportunity. Never has so high an opportunity confronted a conference as at Quebec.

QUEBEC failed to respond to that opportunity. No note of urgency sounded from Quebec. No recognition of the new war situation was heard from Quebec. Instead, doubts, suspicions, pessimistic warnings, hints of political differences gnawing at the foundations of the alliance, seeped out from the unofficial press echoes of the Conference. At a time when all the attention of the world was fixed on the blazing centre of Europe and the new possibilities of action, the official communique announced that "the military discussions turned very largely on the war against Japan." There was no suggestion of any revision of timetables or

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increased urgency of action. Indeed, President Roosevelt has recently claimed that the subsequent landing in Italy had proceeded entirely according to the schedule laid down at Casablanca—as if nothing of importance had happened in between to make necessary any revision of plans. The official communique made no reference to the Soviet Union in the war, but, after emphasising the "entire unity of aim and method" of the British Empire and the United States in the war, and the full participation of Chiang Kai Shek's representative, curtly added that alongside future Anglo-American Conferences already arranged there might be "possible" tripartite meetings with the Soviet Union and that "full reports of the decisions, so far as they affect the war against Germany and Italy, will be furnished to the Soviet Government." The only public sign of a positive outcome from the Conference was the advance towards partial recognition of the French National Committee.

THE significance of the special emphasis of the war against Japan at this juncture inevitably suggests the reflection of other than purely strategic considerations, in view of the known pressure of isolationist and reactionary forces in the United States and corresponding elements in Britain. The progress backwards from Casablanca is apparent. Casablanca: First Germany, then Japan. Washington: Germany and Japan equally. Quebec: main attention on Japan. It is impossible to fail to see a certain political bearing in this special insistence at this moment on the war against Japan, in view of the fact that this is made the diplomatic ground for differentiation between the war of the Anglo-American coalition and the war of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. In this way the basis is laid in certain quarters for a theory of "two wars," one primarily carried on by the Anglo-American coalition, and the other mainly fought by the Soviet Union, with two separate strategic lines and timetables. The dangers of any such tendency are manifest.

THE rift between the European war situation and the atmosphere of Quebec is so glaring that it has created in many respects a critical situation in respect of the whole development of the war and the future of closer co-operation of the alliance, at the very moment when all the objective factors were never so favourable for effective closer co-operation and victory. Mr. Churchill's broadcast on August 31, immediately following the Conference, was evidently intended to allay the wide disquiet caused by the outcome of Quebec, and to conciliate Soviet opinion. But, behind all the complimentary references to the Soviet Union, the same negative outlines of the Quebec decisions were manifest.

THE opposition to the demand for the immediate Second Front was, for the first time, officially presented and made the central theme of the speech—at the very time when all the previous arguments against it have disappeared. Previously it was argued, in all the preceding speeches of the Prime Minister and Government Ministers, that only practical difficulties, in respect of available armed forces, arms and equipment, or shipping, stood in the way. The last alleged ground for delay, in the Prime Minister's speech earlier this year, was the U-boat menace. If this obstacle could be surmounted, it was declared, the last obstacle would disappear. But now the mastery of the U-boat menace has been the theme of triumphant ministerial speeches. What then remains? There is no longer any attempt to present any technical or practical difficulties in the way of the Second Front. It is, therefore, not surprising that many critics should draw the conclusion that the only remaining difficulties must be political.

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YET in the face of this Mr. Churchill could argue that military considerations must not be sacrificed to "political" demands for the Second Front.

> I look forward to the day when British and American liberating armies will cross the Channel in full force and come to close quarters with the German invaders of France. You would certainly not wish me to tell you when that is likely to happen, or whether it be near or far. But whenever the great blow is struck you may be sure that it will be because we are satisfied that there is a good prospect of continuing success and that our soldiers' lives are expended in accordance with sound military plans and not squandered for political considerations of any kind.

It is to the credit of every statement of Mr. Churchill on this issue up to date (and his speech to Parliament on September 21 has repeated this service) that he has never sought to confuse the question of what is the Second Front, to take refuge in the cheap illiterate subterfuges of other Ministers of pretending to lose his way in a myriad of other fronts, and that he has always stated plainly that "the great blow" which must be the governing aim of Anglo-American strategy is the Second Front in France, when the "British and American liberating armies cross the Channel in full force." For this candour we may be thankful, when we contrast the drivel with which other Ministers, official spokesmen and press editorials seek to befog this serious issue, and to greet every encounter of Anglo-American forces with a minute fraction of Nazi forces as "the Second Front at last."

BUT the weakness of this argument as an apology for failing to strike "the great blow" now, when there is admittedly overwhelming superiority of Allied arms in numbers, men, weapons, equipment, shipping and air mastery, when the Red Army is driving back over two-thirds (according to General Marshall, four-fifths) of the Nazi armies, when the Nazi military situation is most critical, is so glaring that it is difficult to believe that its author is not aware of its weakness. The demand for the Second Front is based on the plain facts and requirements of the military situation. It is the opposition propaganda that reflects reactionary political considerations cutting across military requirements. The opposition clamour against the Second Front comes precisely from those quarters which were most prominent in supporting Munich.

SIMILARLY with the apology for delay on the grounds of seeking to avoid "squandering our soldiers' lives." This is a dangerous line of argument. It recalls too closely the deceptive arguments with which Munich was put across as also meaning the "saving of lives," even at the expense of other nations. At that time also the Communists and those of the Left or of the Right who stood for collective resistance to Fascism were denounced as bloodthirsty warmongers, while Mr. Chamberlain was held up to admiration as the Prince of Peace and saviour of men's lives. The cost of that policy is written to-day in the blood of millions of dead. But at that time Mr. Churchill had no hesitation to face the calumnies and stand with the Left and with his own handful of supporters against the Munichite Tory majority. The demand for the Second Front is the demand for a strategy which will mean the speediest victory with the minimum cost in lives and sacrifices. It is the alternative strategy which means the "long, long war," and which will mean, if allowed to go through, the heaviest cost in lives and sacrifices.

IT is in this situation that the greatest responsibility falls on the labour and democratic movement in this country to fulfil a positive role of leadership in the present critical moment of the war. We cannot afford to let ourselves be confused by the many inspiring new favourable factors which exist into failing to see the

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dangerous alternative tendencies and increased activity of hostile forces which are at work. The present opportunities are in danger of being squandered. The price of delay will be heavy. The decisions for action which need to be taken have not been taken, and will not be taken unless the powerful pressure of popular opinion compels them. And it is here that the failure of the Trades Union Congress to respond to the plain needs of the present war situation represents a serious setback which needs to be rapidly remedied. The Trades Union Congress revealed in general the signal growth of advancing progressive forces in the working-class movement, of militancy, confidence and the drive to greater unity. But on the central issue of the present war situation, decisive for the whole future, the Trades Union Congress failed to give leadership at the most critical moment of the war.

WHY did the Trades Union Congress fail to give leadership? It is true, but not sufficient to say that the delegates were misled by false information on the military situation, that they were led to believe that the Second Front in France had already been opened, and that, having expressed their feelings by their wholehearted acclamation of that announcement, they felt it superfluous to discuss the issue of whether they should exercise pressure for such a Second Front. In fact, the confusion existed before the announcement, already following the news of the capitulation of Italy, and this confusion was itself the expression of a deeper failure. The readiness to accept false information so uncritically was only a symptom of this deeper failure. The root weakness was the failure to understand the positive role of vigilance and leadership which the labour movement needs to exercise in a war against Fascism, not only on domestic issues, not only on post-war issues, but on the vital issues of the conduct of the war, if such a war is to be carried forward to democratic victory over Fascism.

IT is necessary to recognise that the new war situation, raising many new issues, has been accompanied by a temporary confusion of public opinion, and that the reactionaries have not been slow to take advantage of this. A riot of easy optimism and credulous confidence swept through opinion during August and the first week of September, following the fall of Mussolini, the Soviet victories and the capitulation of Italy. The dangers of inaction and delay were concealed behind a roseate haze of self-satisfaction. Fascism was seen as already cracking. "1918" became the catchword — forgetful of the mighty Western offensive which made 1918 possible. The favourable situation was coolly claimed as a triumph of the alternative strategy to the Second Front—regardless of the plain fact that the main driving force of the crisis of Fascism throughout Europe was the advance of the Red Army, driving back two-thirds of Hitler's forces, while the Anglo-American armies had not yet engaged one-fiftieth of Hitler's forces. Perhaps, it was suggested, the Second Front would not be necessary. Perhaps the sacrifices might be passed on to others. Perhaps air bombing would be enough. Perhaps metal could replace men. This debauch of illusions reached its unhappy height at the Trades Union Congress, which abdicated from the responsibility of leadership in favour of a pandemonium of passive applauding of magnified victories and imaginary offensives.

SUBSEQUENT events of the war, especially the disillusionment on the situation in Italy, have delivered the first shock of awakening. But it is only a beginning; the awakening will need to be carried very much further. Behind the roseate haze of illusions and inaction Fascism was given time to make a partial recovery in Italy and the West—even though the strength of Allied forces is

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fully adequate to check that recovery, and the enlarging offensive of the Red Army continues to pound the main Nazi forces in the East, thus giving still the opportunity for the unutilised majority of the Anglo-American forces in the West to take decisive action for victory.

NAZI propaganda, confident in the absence of a Second Front in the West, already begins to try to claim that the most dangerous moment of crisis has been passed. General Dittmar, in his broadcast on September 14, claimed that the "underbelly" may have been "soft" for a certain period "while certain political conditions prevailed" (i.e., during the surging advance of Italian anti-Fascism, while the Nazi forces in Italy were few and weak), but that, this moment of opportunity for Allied action having been let slip, it is "no longer soft." Goebbels, on September 16, declared that

> "Germany has passed an abyss on a very narrow path during the last few weeks"

but that, by a "miraculous and almost improbable development"

> "a danger which looked deadly in the beginning has been averted."

The "miracle" is not so mysterious. The progenitors of the "miracle" need not be sought in divine or infernal regions. They should rather be sought in the citadel heights of Quebec or the conference halls of Southport. The verdict of future generations will not lightly forgive those who, whether Government Ministers or Trade Union Congress leaders, fall short in this hour of responsibility.

WE can change this situation. We can certainly defeat these hollow Nazi boasts. Gigantic forces now exist on the side of the peoples for victory over Fascism. But in order to realise the possibilities which now exist it is essential to fight actively; to rally the labour movement from the present passivity on the war; to combat the dangerous tendencies which have revealed themselves at Quebec and in the Prime Minister's latest speech, and to compel the necessary changes in the Government's policy; above all, to compel full-scale offensive action and the consolidation of the alliance. There may be a tide in the affairs of men; but, as James Russell Lowell used to say: "Truly there is a tide in the affairs of men, but there is no gulf-stream setting for ever in one direction."

R. P. D.

September 21, 1943.

Non-Intervention

by WILLIAM RUST

"GOD forgive me, I voted for non-intervention myself," exclaimed a delegate at the Southport Trades Union Congress. It was a cry from the heart which echoed the thoughts of millions who to-day bitterly regret that they were trapped into a policy which resulted in the betrayal of the Spanish Republic.

But this was said at a T.U.C. which, in its approach to the urgent military questions of the day, repeated exactly those types of errors which are now so deeply regretted. The T.U.C. declared for non-intervention by the labour movement in the question of the Second Front. These concern only the experts, declared Sir Walter Citrine, who omitted to mention that the experts had declared for the Second Front as far back as 1942. He also asked how could British trade union leaders be expected to express opinions on matters of high military importance on which they had no training.

Just as non-intervention in relation to Spain meant the giving of a free hand to the Fascist aggressors, so does the attitude of non-intervention in relation to the urgent question of the Second Front mean a free hand to all those reactionary

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forces which are sabotaging the striking of the decisive, victory blow.

Incidentally, it should be noted that despite his modest disclaimers Sir Walter Citrine most certainly expressed opinions on matters of high military importance. He supported the conception of victory through air power, expressed himself negatively on the Second Front and exaggerated its difficulties and attacked Russia's policy towards Japan on military grounds. All of which goes to prove that the non-intervention which he persuaded the Congress to accept is really a method of intervention in favour of a particular military policy and a particular set of experts.

It would be wrong to conclude from this that the T.U.C. as a whole is for those policies which are so obviously in the mind of its General Secretary. In fact, Citrine had considerable difficulty in manoeuvring his resolution through. But it would be folly to close one's eyes to the weaknesses, prejudices and false views which are still deeply imbedded amongst the British people and which reactionary leaders foster in order to put over their policies.

"Do not get mixed up with Spain; it means being dragged into war." Millions fell for this policy, which prepared the way for the present war. "Why worry about Czechoslovakia, it is only a small country about which we know little?" Millions cheered the Munich policy which made the war inevitable. The politicians who resorted to these arguments would never have dared to do so but for their belief that they would find a response because of the insularity which is still so widespread in Britain.

To-day a new argument, in keeping with the above, is being skilfully peddled. It is suggested that the war can be won without the necessity of the British people making any real sacrifices in man-power. In his Quebec broadcast Churchill sought to pretend that the advocates of the Second Front are motivated by "political considerations" and justified his policy of inaction by the claim "that our soldiers' lives are expended in accordance with sound military plans." The implication of this statement is obvious, namely, that whereas the Government is concerned with saving lives the advocates of the Second Front want recklessly to expend them.

This line of propaganda has also been dignified by the addition of the so-called theory of "metal not men," assiduously spread by Transport House, according to which the war can be won principally by machines. It is a useful theory to those who want to hold back from action and naturally has a certain appeal. No one wants to sacrifice lives unnecessarily and, as we saw in the case of Spain and Munich, it is possible to secure a response from various sections of the population to propaganda which claims that the burden of the sacrifice can be left to the people of other countries.

Our objection to this theory is that it in no way corresponds to the military and political realities and actually leads to the very opposite of what it claims. Non-intervention and Munich resulted in the present war. Metal, not men, means its prolongation and consequent heavier sacrifice of life.

The war machines must be handled by men. They do not move of their own accord. The real question is now to bring into action the machines, which we now possess in abundance, so that the casualties are reduced to a minimum. Here one has to face the strategical questions of time, place and speed. If favourable opportunities for striking the decisive blow are lost, a vast accumulated mass of metal is not a means of saving men: it only means that the fight at a later stage will have to be all the harder. The case for the Second Front in 1943 is that this is the hour of supreme opportunity. The Nazis, reeling back on the Eastern Front, are still subject to the initiative of the Red Army and have been unable to pass over to their planned defensive strategy. But owing to the resources of Hitlerite Ger-

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many they may succeed in doing this if the invasion of the West is further delayed. This is one of the lessons of the Italian situation, where the policy of delay has enabled the Nazis again to seize the initiative, with the result that the Anglo-American forces have already suffered considerable casualties and are faced with the prospect of a long and bitter campaign.

The metal, not men, theory also has entirely negative effects on the morale of the nation. In practice, it means that the British people are being urged to save their own lives at the expense of the Russians, who are so freely giving theirs in the common fight. How can the people of this country be expected to rise to the great heights of herosim and sacrifice which the winning of this world war demands if such spiritless and white-livered arguments are pumped into them. What a contrast there is between such sentiments and the noble utterances of statesmen about the greatness of the cause we are fighting for and the profundity of the principles which bind the United Nations together. How profound is the difference between the spirit engendered by this propaganda of leave it to someone else and the exaltation which the nation showed when statesmen spoke a different language, as in the days of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain.

The contrast is further heightened when one compares the popular reception given to counsels of delay and news about action. Despite the fact that the people are constantly fed on propaganda designed to show that the opening of the Second Front would be a colossal blunder, any news that suggests that large scale invasion has begun is received with rapturous applause. This was the case at the T.U.C. when the delegates were told that large scale operations had begun between Dunkirk and Boulogne. Unfortunately, this turned out to be untrue. But the fact that the opponents of the Second Front are compelled to engage in a constant propaganda designed to prove that the present limited operations really constitute a Second Front, proves that they are aware of the deep rooted desire for action.

All of this shows that although, generally speaking, the mass of the British people are wholeheartedly in the fight against Fascism, there is also a tendency to accept policies which mean rejecting Britain's responsibilities to itself and to other countries in the belief that this will be a means of avoiding sacrifice. This tendency is fostered by the reactionaries and it thrives during inaction, it leads to complacency and that false patriotism which replaces a pride in one's country by an exaggeration and boasting in relation to the others. Antagonistic to this tendency and fighting against it is the policy represented by the strivings of the most progressive section of the nation—the honest fulfilment of international obligations, without which neither victory nor lasting peace can be secured. This policy is fruitful of daring and courage, it leads to great deeds on the battlefield and in the factory.

Because the representatives of the above tendency, which can be rather sweepingly labelled as "non-intervention," occupy such powerful positions in the Government and press, they often succeed in confusing large numbers of people and encouraging that kind of backwardness which gave a mass basis to the disastrous policies of non-intervention and Munich. When the country appears to be in danger these reactionaries slink into their kennels, but so soon as the situation improves, out they come again with their policies of delay and indecision.

This is one of the reasons for the extraordinary fact that the mass movement for the opening of the Second Front rose to its greatest heights when the Red Army was in retreat, but subsided when the Red Army began to advance, and when, in fact, the objective conditions for the opening of the Second Front and the achievement of victory became more favourable than they had ever been before.

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This cannot be dismissed as a natural political phenomenon. Certainly, there is always the danger of complacency when things are going well. But this subsiding of the mass movement cannot be explained in terms of automatic cause and effect, especially as the popular determination to get on with the war and to win is in no sense weakened. *It is the organised political fight for the victory policy that has become weakened during recent months.* Why? Because a vicious political campaign against the short-term victory policy which is the essence of what the Second Front means is being carried out by the reactionary camp, and because the Prime Minister, who formerly spoke in heroic, uplifting terms, has begun to use a language full of warnings, cautions and forecasts of a long war, which results in the damping down of the militancy and enthusiasm of the people.

The existence of a deeply-rooted tradition in the labour movement that military matters have no relation to politics and are the concern of experts proves very serviceable to reactionary propagandists. This tradition explains why, from the side of the Labour press there is never any reply to the military views expounded by various millionaire journals. The *Daily Herald* is, in fact, expressly warned by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, not to enter the field of military controversy in favour of the Second Front. This ban even extends to a refusal to publish resolutions for the Second Front passed by the national conferences of important unions.

On the other hand, the reactionary press now strikes a most aggressive note against the Second Front in the West. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, declared that "the unconditional surrender of Italy, with immense consequences, is a far greater success than could have been attained by the opening of any Second Front in the West." These opinions were echoed by the provincial press even to the point of fatuous absurdity. The *Birmingham Gazette* wrote: "It may be doubted whether victories so great and so continuous have ever been won at so comparatively small cost since another Alexander conquered his world with the loss of a handful of men."

A week later the grim realities of the Italian situation were revealed for all to see, but only for these organs of the press to declare that the very fact that there is no victory in Italy is a tribute to Anglo-American policy which has engaged a sufficiently large number of German troops there to constitute a Second Front. To bolster up this nonsense false reports about the withdrawal of a large number of German divisions from the Eastern Front were widely publicised. The official denials from Moscow received but scant attention.

The policies of non-intervention, which are still propagated by the dominant leaders of the labour movement are one of the causes of the dependent position which the movement still occupies in the Government despite the fact that this people's war has enormously increased the weight and authority of the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative organisations. These policies mean, in fact, political abdication and submission to the leadership of the Tory Party on the most vital questions of the day.

The labour movement and the people must arouse themselves to a full understanding as to what is really being done behind the smoke screen of "leave it to the experts." Step by step the most reactionary forces in Britain are strengthening their position and influencing military policy. These Munichites will not save the lives of British soldiers, but by delay will make the final fight all the more difficult, they will seek a "peace" which will leave the power of the international Fascist line-up (and in this we include the Fifth Column in Britain and America) virtually unimpaired, they will sow seeds of bitterness and distrust between the British people and the people of other countries, particularly France and the Soviet Union.

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To-day more than ever it is necessary for the progressive sections of the British people to unite behind policies which will arouse a new mood of exaltation in the nation, which will enable the people to face unflinchingly the sacrifices which the fight for victory makes inevitable and which will equip our people to construct a people's peace which can be achieved only on the firm basis of international co-operation.

T.U.C.

by ARTHUR HORNER

A NEW spirit was evident at this year's T.U.C. From the moment when the first woman President, Dame Anne Loughlin, commenced to deliver her very healthy Presidential Address, one could sense that this would be no ordinary gathering of "The Workers' Parliament." The proceedings during the week justified these expectations, despite the grave error in failing to secure a really full debate on the war situation and the measures which the trade union movement ought to take to ensure speedy victory.

The debates on many important resolutions demonstrated that new forces are arising, and that they will make their presence felt in the daily work of the movement and in the Trade Union Congresses of the future.

There was a general concern that the trade union movement should have a clear policy, especially on important questions, and that sectional interests should not be permitted to stand in the way of clear definitions of policy.

There was ample evidence of the urge towards strengthening the movement through greater unity, and by improving the leadership.

The main anxiety of the majority of the delegates was to remove impediments to production, and to ensure that the maximum shall be done to safeguard the conditions of the workers so as to prevent the exploitation of working-class patriotism by employers, who see in the war situation the opportunity to impose conditions which they have always desired to impose.

The one-sided character of the Essential Work Orders was strongly criticised on the grounds that whilst provision is made in them for the punishment of workers for misdemeanours and/or failures to comply with various provisions, no penalties can be imposed upon employers under the Orders.

The view was expressed that the introduction of punitive clauses against employers who can be proved to have impeded production by inefficient handling of labour questions is urgently necessary in the interests of continued production.

The need for the early implementation of the Beveridge Report was stressed in the same connection. It was felt that millions of workers see the end of the war as the time when impoverishment due to unemployment and destitution will again enter their lives, and for that reason have subconscious fears about its early termination. The acceptance by the Government of this Report, and the early declaration of its intention to put it into full effect would serve to allay these fears, and lead to a new effort to do everything possible to win the war quickly.

The discussions upon post-war questions were important, because of the effect which post-war governmental undertakings can have upon the war-time mood of the workers.

There is a very deep belief that capitalist governments and the employing class generally have the intention of imposing similar experiences upon the working-class to those which prevailed after the last war.

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That these intentions exist is undeniable, but what is even more plain is the intention of the trade union movement to defeat these plans.

The trade union movement will exert its power and leadership in the coming post-war situation in a manner which will shock these reactionary elements if the speeches of delegates to this Congress are an indication of the workers' general attitude.

The resolution of the Mineworkers' Federation, which called upon the General Council to examine the good and bad aspects of war-time labour legislation was aimed at the maintenance of the good (i.e., guaranteed week), and the termination of the bad (tied to an employer), etc.

In this way we can remove the latent fear of peace, we can key up the whole movement by preparing to recover all the sacrifices made in the interests of the war effort, at the same time ensuring that certain substantial gains of the war shall be made permanent features.

The urge to greater unity was shown by the decision to permit the reaffiliation of the Chemical Workers Union, the demand for inquiry into trade union structure, the lifting of the ban upon the Labour Research Department, and most of all by the withdrawal of the so-called Black Circular.

The temper of the Congress was roused when Sir Walter Citrine reported upon the Trade Disputes Act, which still prevents the affiliation of civil servants.

The Government and the Tory Party will do well to pay heed to the rumblings of Congress in this connection.

Had the General Council so chosen, a major political crisis would have arisen from Sir Walter's report, which would have brought the country's unity into jeopardy.

Tory M.P.'s should beware lest they strain the workers' patriotism beyond the limit.

The removal of the ban which prevented Communists from being elected by their Trade Union organisations as delegates to Trades Councils, should go far towards strengthening local organisation. More life and vitality should soon become apparent as a consequence of the entry of new forces and the sense of greater unity which must result from this decision.

It was known that the majority of the votes were in favour of removing this indefensible edict of the General Council, and the accommodation made by the General Council in its declaration to Congress was, from its point of view and from that of Congress, wise and timely.

The Mineworkers Federation had a special interest in the re-establishment of the L.R.D.

Its services to mineworkers have been highly valued by the M.F.G.B., and it was only because of a slip up in voting last year that the Federation vote was not cast, giving the result then that has now come about.

The General Council were aware that an error had been made, that there was a majority in favour of lifting this ban a year ago, but refused to withdraw until the very last minute.

The Labour Party will be well advised to take note of these tendencies in the trade union movement in good time; the overwhelming urge towards unity is there for all to see; to forestall compulsion later it is necessary to make a gesture now which will accord with the spirit of the decisions of this year's T.U.C.

There was not a big debate on India, deserving as the Indian question is of serious discussion. This was regrettable. The Congress, however, left no room for doubt as to its view that the time is long overdue when a new effort should be made to find an agreement which would permit full Indian co-operation in the common effort to destroy Fascism. The means to bring this about were clearly indicated in the resolution which was carried.

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The Miners Federation delegation considered it important that the movement and the Government should be clearly informed about our views upon the treatment of workers killed and injured in the course of their employment.

It fell to my lot to make this view clear. The atmosphere of Congress was more than sympathetic.

This is not a question of common humanity. Its proper solution is vital to the successful prosecution of the war.

The coal situation is alarming; the existing man-power is on the borders of open revolt against bad treatment, and most of all against the impoverishment of men called upon to work at greater risks and then to suffer destitution whilst disabled.

Compensation is very important in an industry employing 700,000 men, of whom approximately 1,000 are killed by accident or die through industrial disease every year, and more than 100,000 are disabled for various periods.

Compensation is the weekly wage of an injured man and it ought not to be less than the weekly wage.

Unless this is amended, there can be no satisfaction amongst mineworkers, and the possibilities of increasing our man-power, now being depleted at the rate of 30,000 per year, are very remote.

The continued shortage of man-power for the mining industry will prolong the war.

In the fight against Vansittartism, there was never any doubt as to how the voting would go, from the moment when the President in her address said:—

I pray that our organised movement will be kept free from this terrible disease of the spirit, and will use its utmost influence to assuage those destructive passions, and to work for a just peace which will offer the foundations of a reconciliation of the nations. . . .

Those who have maltreated them must be punished. But our aim must be just punishment and not revenge. We must, in the coming peace, strive to make a peace that will provide the guarantees of security and the reinforcement of international order and human right without leaving an aftermath of embittered hatred between peoples that will surely lead to war again.

The roar of cheering that broke out at this point showed that whatever might be the viewpoint of certain elements in the Congress, and the vehemence of their propaganda, there was going to be no truck with Vansittart.

The speeches of the Fraternal Delegates were received with a serious attention which in itself showed the recognition of the gravity of the present war crisis. In every delegate's mind was the question of the Second Front, irrespective of whether they were for or against Congress expressing an opinion on the matter. The fights in various trade union delegation meetings were the proof of this. It was common knowledge that all the week discussions had been taking place both in the General Purposes Committee and with these delegations who wanted a definite decision taken in favour of the immediate opening of the Second Front. I believe that what took place in the Miners' Delegation meetings was characteristic of many others: namely, that an impression was created that the General Council would be taking a stronger stand than they did a year ago, and that it would be unnecessary to press for any emergency resolution. Alongside this, there was a widespread feeling that the opening of the Second Front was imminent.

In this atmosphere Comrade Shvernik made his speech. It was listened to, in the very difficult conditions of the Congress Hall, with rapt attention. The scenes at the close of the speech, with the singing of the "Internationale," showed the profound impression that had been created by his recital of the policy of the Soviet Union since June, 1941, the part played by the Soviet Trade Unions, the immensity of the sacrifices, the significance of the glorious victories, all leading up to the sharp decisive part of the speech dealing with the Second Front.

As the delegates left the Hall, they were greeted with the news of the unconditional surrender of Italy, which further

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strengthened their belief that other big events were to hand.

Next morning, the woman Soviet delegate made her speech. It told of the unparalleled activity of the women of the Soviet Union, portraying a scene of heroism and bravery such as the world workers have never heard before. Its moving appeal, its facts regarding the individual bravery and courage of many Soviet women, in industry and at the front, created an indelible impression on all those who heard it. No wonder our comrade received such an ovation when she had finished.

Then came the speeches of the fraternal delegates of the American Federation of Labour. They contained many useful facts. They gave a picture of America's war effort in industry; but from their picture one would never have guessed that such a powerful trade union organisation as the Congress of Industrial Organisation existed—and not only existed, but was especially strong in the very industries boosted as having the proudest records in American production.

One of the American delegates made an attack on the Soviet Trade Unions. Only the traditional British sense of courtesy to a fraternal delegate prevented an angry outburst. In her opening address, the President had said:—

> I am convinced that Congress acted wisely and in time when it directed the General Council to take steps which have led to the creation of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. The work of that Committee, and the purpose inspiring it, have been justified by their results. The two-way visits of the Committee's members have deepened confidence and have brought our two movements into closer association than they have ever known before.

That is perfectly true, and despite other regrettable things which happened at Southport—such as the refusal to allow the Soviet Fraternal Delegates to reply to the attack of the Americans—it will remain true. As the Soviet Delegates will find wherever they travel and visit, the rank and file of the British trade union movement are solidly with them, and will never allow anything to disrupt the solidarity of the two great trade union movements.

Congress was taken completely by surprise by the statement that Sir Walter Citrine thought fit to make on the two points of difference that existed—in relation to the Second Front, and in relation to the extension of the work of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee to the trade union movements of all the United Nations.

It was deplorable in the extreme that in attempting to evade the direct issue of the Second Front, despite the emphasis Comrade Shvernik placed on this and the unanswerable arguments he advanced, resort should have been made to a sheer distortion of what was involved.

Instead of facing the issue, a kind of competition was developed in comparing the respective war efforts of Britain and the Soviet Union. We can all be proud of what Britain and our people have done since 1939, but in face of the gigantic sacrifices of the Soviet Union, we also have the duty of seeing our efforts in their correct relation to theirs. Such comparisons can only give rise to wrong impressions and conclusions that can lead to further misunderstanding and difficulties.

Citrine's speech, explaining the differences between the British and Russian Trade Union Committees, did not seem to be actuated by a desire of bringing them closer together. Rather, it appeared to be an attempt to satisfy his own conscience, which was disturbed by our relative inadequacies.

No opportunity was given to reply to the Citrine speech. The trade union delegations had not been given any facilities for discussing the very serious issues raised, although they would willingly have sat in an evening session to thrash out the position. Instead, as soon as Citrine sat down, the President immediately got up and passed on to other sections of the General Council's report.

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At the close of the session on Thursday morning a remarkable scene took place. Congress Hall had been buzzing all the morning with rumours that a Second Front had opened in France, that the American Navy were in Genoa, that the American Army had entered Naples, and so on.

At 12.30 Sir Walter Citrine got up to make a special announcement. He stated that the American Navy had entered Genoa, that Allied troops were at Naples, Leghorn and other places on the Italian coast, and that a landing had taken place on the coast of France between Boulogne and Dunkirk.

Immediately every delegate was on his feet. Citrine led the Congress in three cheers at the news, and there was not a person there who did not think the Second Front had been opened. It was a remarkable demonstration, and what took place in the afternoon does not in the slightest degree invalidate the significance of this demonstration.

I have said that heated discussions had gone on all the week about the Second Front. Those delegates who were opposed to bringing pressure on to Government to open the Second Front took that line because they felt it to be a matter for the experts. Yet immediately they were told that a landing had taken place on the coast of France—and this is what they were told—they were on their feet cheering like mad.

The Government and the General Council should be under no illusion about the significance of such a demonstration. It proves the support of Congress delegates for an action that they considered to be long overdue.

When at the opening of the afternoon session nothing was said by Citrine about a mistake having been made, the majority of the delegates still thought that the Second Front had been opened. In all this confusion, Congress was in no mood to tolerate any discussion on the resolution of the General Council or the amendment of the Fire Brigade Union. They thought both resolution and amendment superfluous, and that the main thing was to get on with the job of supporting all demands that the Second Front would make.

That is still the dominant intention of the movement. It will continue to press with increased vigour for the immediate opening of the Second Front. The applause at the Congress shows how deep is the conviction and understanding that the only way to shorten and win the war, to save "precious British lives," and to make a secure peace, lies through the Second Front. This is the all-important aspect of what took place at Southport. It should be seized upon, driven home, and used to the fullest possible extent.

Taking the Southport Trades Union Congress as a whole, I believe it will be a landmark in the long history of the trades union movement of Britain.

There was a marked turn to the Left, noted by every responsible writer who had occasion to deal with Southport. The domination of Congress by the Right Wing met a real challenge; indeed, so strong did the current run that on occasions when it was clear the General Council would have liked to oppose certain resolutions, the surety of defeat made them allow the issues to go through unopposed.

No one could fail to remark the impatience of Congress when the representatives of the General Unions got up to speak or ask questions. Rightly or wrongly, there was a feeling that they represented deep-rooted political prejudice, obscuring balanced judgment and hindering the encouragement of new approaches, new ideas, and new leading forces.

The turn at Southport seemed to me strongly reminiscent of the fight that Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, John Burns and Will Thorne put up in the latter part of the 1880s and the beginnings of the '90s against the reactionary leadership typified

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in Henry Broadhurst and his colleagues. It may be asked, where were the Tom Manns and Ben Tilletts at Southport? My answer is quite clear. They could not be named, but they were there—the young, keen trade unionists who mounted the speakers' tribune on every occasion that afforded itself, giving their direct factory and local trade union experiences with a freshness and confidence that will grow in strength in a very short time.

They should be encouraged. A way should be found for the new active people to find expression on the General Council. This decisive body of the Trades Union Congress has tended for far too long to be a close corporation, selected in advance by the leaderships of the most important trade unions, without rank and file trade unionists in many Unions having the opportunity to make nominations, and without regard to the qualities of leadership displayed in the daily work and during the actual proceedings of the Trades Union Congress itself.

The methods of election also need to be looked into, so as to avoid the dangerous position of the election of Congress leaders being determined, not through merit but through the vested interests of particular Trade Unions.

It is now urgently necessary to ensure not only that the policy of the Southport Congress on all the issues I have mentioned should be made widely known (by mass meetings of trade unionists, convened by the General Council in all the principal industrial centres, as well as by reports in trade union journals and to Executive Committees) but also that more democratic methods should be found of electing the General Council. Only then will it represent the new times and be able to meet the serious and entirely new problems the trade union movement faces.

Above all, in reporting the Southport Congress, let the meaning of the scene welcoming what was thought to be the Second Front be fully explained to the rank and file. The enthusiasm evoked at the Congress can be the basis for building the mass pressure on the Government to carry out this action in reality. It can at the same time bring the Anglo-Soviet trade union movements closer together, deepening the understanding of how the interests of the British working-class, present and future, are indestructibly bound up with those of the Soviet Union. It can, through this, bring about a situation in which complete success will attend the efforts of the General Council in convening the World Conference of Trade Unions that Southport demanded.

From the First to the Second World War*

by VLADIMIR POTEMKIN

THE Second World War is not yet over, but attempts are already being made to write its history, to reveal the causes of the war, depict its preparation and determine those responsible for it.

Unfortunately these digressions into history frequently lack the necessary knowledge of facts and are clearly biased. This bias is manifest in particular in attempts to justify the policy of "appeasement" of aggressors, which in practice proved to be a direct tolerance extended toward the war incendiaries.

Further, attempts are being made to shuffle facts and give a distorted picture of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union during the period preceding the Second World War. But no one will succeed in hiding such a glaring fact of that period as the numerous and persistent attempts by

* This article has been translated from the Soviet journal *War and the Working Class*, No. 8, where it appeared under the title "The Pre-Second World War Period and the Soviet Union's Struggle for Peace."

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the Soviet Union to induce the Governments of Great Britain and France to organise a joint anti-Hitler front as early as that date.

Despite these efforts this was not achieved, solely because the leaders of European policy at that time—men of the Chamberlain and Daladier type and of the Beck type in Poland—contrary to the true national interests of those countries, had no desire to create such a joint front, but wished, on the contrary, to violate the Soviet Union and give Germany a free hand in the East.

Biased distortions of historic truth cannot hold out in face of the irrefutable testimony of facts showing how the Second World War was really prepared and how throughout its existence the Soviet Union persistently and tirelessly fought for peace between the nations.

Soviet foreign policy has always pursued the aim of peace. Nevertheless, the leaders of our state clearly realised that, following the first imperialist war, mankind was being led towards a new world catastrophe. Not peace, but hostility, saturated the atmosphere at Versailles, where Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Italy divided the spoils. Deep contradictions were revealed between the former Allies. The British feared the excessive strengthening of their French partner. In opposition to Clemenceau and Foch, they were opposed to the dismemberment of Germany, to wresting the Rhineland and the Saar from her and to forcing her to pay £3,000,000,000 for the restoration of the north-eastern departments of France alone. The reactionaries framing Britain's foreign policy needed Germany to counter the French desire for hegemony in Europe, and as a force which might prove useful for the rout of Bolshevik Russia.

The severe onslaught of the French imperialists against Germany was also opposed by the U.S.A., which was concerned with one thing: preventing new international upheavals in Europe in order to collect war debts from its former Allies. Several years were to pass and the same Americans thought of how to preserve intact their capital investments in Germany. Business circles in the Transatlantic Republic were disturbed by the thought that Clemenceau and Lloyd George, by bringing pressure to bear on Germany, might strangle the hen that lays the golden eggs. At the Peace Conference President Wilson pictured his mission in the noblest form. Actually this new saviour of mankind pursued very mundane aims: the world hegemony of the U.S.A., the superiority of the American Navy over the British and the dismemberment of Russia.

Alive to the rumblings of the struggle flaring up among the victors, the Germans missed no opportunity to utilise it in their interests. Shirking the terms of the Versailles Treaty, they secretly preserved and increased their armed forces, delayed reparations payments, conducted secret negotiations now with the British, now with the French, calculating on inciting one against the other. Operating now with flattering promises, now with crude blackmail, pacifist camouflage or brazen threats of Germany's bankruptcy allegedly about to result in a Bolshevik revolution, German diplomacy ceaselessly fanned hostility between the victors in an endeavour to gain the time necessary for German imperialism's designs directed towards revenge.

The jackal which had failed to succeed in wresting the spoils promised to it from the conqueror—Italy—cast a greedy eye around, seeking for means to compensate for this disappointment.

The Entente Allies, who during the redivision of Europe, bit off more than they could chew, trembled over their unstable acquisitions for fear of not being able to hold them. The punished accomplices of Germany, chained by the post-war agreements, cherished impatient dreams of restoration of their former borders and national sovereignty. Europe was in a state of extreme tension aggravated by the economic ruin into which the nations had been plunged by the world war. The at-

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mosphere was charged. Something in the nature of war or an uprising of the masses driven to desperation was in the air.

German diplomacy did its utmost to add to the general uneasiness. Frightening the bourgeoisie of the world with the spectre of social revolution, it tried to win for Germany recognition as the bulwark against the Bolshevik menace, in order to secure help and the possibility of strengthening and arming herself for the struggle against the forces of destruction — invented by herself — allegedly menacing the capitalist world.

Defeated but unyielding, the enemy lured his victims into a dangerous trap. Under cover of the olive branch the knife was sharpened against the Western democracies.

But the reactionary circles of the victorious powers appeared not to notice the German treachery. They sacrificed the national interests of their people to narrow class interests. They saw the main danger not as Imperialist Germany, persistently preparing for military revenge under the guise of the struggle against Bolshevism. They regarded as their main enemy the land of the Soviets, which, in fact, wanted nothing but peace and was directing all its efforts toward the restoration of its national economy.

This anti-Soviet policy of the Western Powers had truly fatal consequences. It favoured Germany's designs, and it strove to isolate so powerful a force for peace as Soviet Russia.

The armed intervention of the capitalist powers, the economic blockade of Russia in accordance with the Clemenceau plan, the incitement of Poland, Rumania and Turkey against the Soviet Republic, counter-revolutionary governments in Georgia, Azerbaidzhan and Armenia, aid to White Guard rebel generals, attempts to form a united anti-Soviet front at diplomatic conferences in Cannes, Genoa and the Hague—such were the initial stages of the anti-Soviet policy pursued by reactionary elements of the victorious powers.

The Soviet-German Agreement at Rapallo meant a crushing breach in the anti-Soviet front. It gave Germany the hope of a possibility of emerging from political and economic isolation. From Soviet Russia's viewpoint, Germany at that time presented itself as the first of the Western European countries which, following the border lands and Russia's eastern neighbours, entered into diplomatic relations with her.

At the Genoa Conference the Soviet Delegation presented an extensive programme of peaceful collaboration of the New Russia with the capitalist countries. But the hand stretched out by Soviet Russia remained in the air. The Governments of the victor countries still reckoned on bringing the Bolshevik to his knees!

The Rapallo Agreement between Soviet Russia and Germany caused dismay in the camp of the victor powers. They already envisaged a political alliance of the two most powerful countries of Central and Eastern Europe; they envisaged a Germany in control of trade with the rich Russian market. Could British and French merchants reconcile themselves with such a situation; in other words, would they deny themselves the profits promised by trade with the Soviet country? And so 1923 saw the beginning of a wholesale desertion from the anti-Soviet front. The year 1924 was marked by a series of recognitions of the Soviet State.

A number of bourgeois countries—Britain, France, Italy and China included—hastened to establish normal diplomatic and trading relations with the U.S.S.R. But it is one thing to profit by agreements with the Soviet country and another to establish honest political collaborations in the interests of peace.

The nearsighted diplomacy of the reactionary capitalist circles persisted in its former attempts to isolate the Soviet Union from participation in dealing with international problems; as before, it flirted with Germany, calculating on

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making her the tool of their anti-Soviet designs. In its turn German diplomacy, too, manifested an interest in agreement with Britain and France.

The motives guiding such a German policy were revealed by Stresemann in a secret letter to the former German Crown Prince dated September 7th, 1925, wherein he frankly admitted that a rapprochement with the victor countries was necessary to Germany, firstly, for a favourable settlement of the reparations problem "under the foreign yoke"; secondly, for the re-establishment of unity of "the German world"; thirdly, for correcting Germany's Eastern frontiers. Thus already in 1925 the designs of German diplomacy contained the beginnings of the future Hitler programme; the abolition of the Versailles obligations, the reunion of "the German world" by armed force, the German conquest of "lebensraum" in Eastern Europe.

Like Hitler, Stresemann was capable of blackmail. In conversation with the British Ambassador in Berlin, D'Abernon, on March 5, 1925, he threatened that, if Poincare continued to persist in his policy of crude pressure on Germany, the latter would form a coalition with Russia; together these two countries would dominate Europe.

The bogey of a Soviet-German alliance had its effect. On October 16, 1925, the Rhineland Guarantee Pact was signed between Germany, France, Belgium, Britain and Italy. *The Times* devoted an editorial to this pact under the pathetic title: Peace Achieved and Honour Preserved.

However, just like the Versailles Treaty, the Rhineland (Locarno) Pact was far from providing a genuine guarantee of peace. True, it confirmed the territorial *status quo* established in post-war Western Europe. But, firstly, German diplomacy paid little regard to such pacts; it is sufficient to recall its attitude towards reparations and the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. Secondly, a far more important thing for Germany was the fact that she had joined the Locarno Pact as a fully equal partner along with the victors, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. Most important, however, was the third factor; to please the Germans the guarantees of the Pact were not extended to the Eastern borders of Germany. In this way Germany was given full freedom to "correct" these borders.

It is not difficult to understand what this meant for Germany's Eastern neighbours and, above all, for the Soviet Union. Naturally, alarm was produced in Czechoslovakia and Poland; all the more did the Soviet Union have to be on guard. It is easy to understand why less than a year later Germany was ceremoniously accepted into the League of Nations, why she was freed from military control and why the International Control Commission was withdrawn from the country.

Under pressure of reactionary circles, Entente diplomacy continued making further concessions to Germany. In June, 1932, the Lausanne Conference actually cancelled Germany's reparation debts. In this way the beast was nurtured with the intention of unleashing it against the Soviet Union at the appropriate moment.

But history was preparing a cruel punishment for the bloodthirsty reactionaries. From Versailles and Locarno they were fated to come down to the disguise of Munich and to military defeat in Western Europe by Hitler's hordes. In their class narrowness, and blinded by hatred for the Soviet Union, they themselves nurtured the mortal enemy of their peoples.

¶ The article on "Hegel's Philosophy of Right" by Roy and Fania Pascal in the September issue, was occasioned by Professor T. M. Knox's new translation of that book. (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 25/-).

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Italy

by G. GIORI

THE Italian situation is a grim lesson for all who pretend that politics can be divorced from strategy; and for all the opponents of the Second Front. There was "unconditional surrender" and the Italian Fleet was handed over: but the visions of immediate bombing of South Germany from the Lombardy plain have given place to the grim reality. Freed by Quebec and all that followed Quebec from preoccupations of defence against a Second Front, the Germans were able to reorganise within Italy; and the Italian anti-Fascist forces have been placed beneath the heel of the Nazis.

The Italian anti-Fascist forces, the men and women who have been fighting for peace and freedom, for friendship with the United Nations and the destruction of Nazi rule, are now in a cruelly difficult situation. The delay and the dickering, the failure to place reliance on these old and tried opponents of Fascism, have contributed to a serious result.

The German forces have had nearly two months in which to establish themselves in all key positions. Patriotic Italians are, and will for some time to come, be fighting at a disadvantage against the Nazi invader. Italian patriots will have to adopt the same means of struggle as patriotic Frenchmen, Yugoslavs, Czechs, and Russians in the occupied parts of the U.S.S.R.; guerilla warfare and sabotage. They will also have to pay the same fearful price and endure the same sacrifices.

The responsibility within Italy for this situation rests squarely on the shoulders of the Badoglio Government with its policy of procrastination and two-faced bargaining. Such a government is incapable of giving that lead to the people which the situation demands. This lead can only be given by people unstained by previous complicity with Fascism, by men who are of the people and with the people. The testing time for the Italian National Front has come, and also for the policies of the British and American Governments.

There is no doubt that when popular feeling towards the Fascist regime was unmistakably expressed, and on the other hand German military might, owing to the defeats in the U.S.S.R., was no longer strong enough to guarantee Italy's integrity, then the Italian ruling class had a very definite purpose in mind in setting up the Badoglio Government. The necessity for a change was realised by them. But this change, in the minds of the Italian ruling class, was not to be a deep and sweeping one. This is evidenced by Badoglio's proclamation at his accession to power; the imposition of strict martial law, no mention of democracy, prohibition of "politics" and no break with Fascism. It is evidenced in the composition of the Badoglio Cabinet. The Italian people should have been content with the removal of Mussolini; for the rest, they should have left things to the "experts" of the Badoglio class; they should have left their hands free for every sort of bargain and haggling while the martyrdom of Italy went on.

This solution proved impracticable from the start. The courage and the political maturity of those who led, organised and understood the Italian people in that situation stands out in a striking way: those forces who brought such strong pressure to bear upon the Badoglio Government, compelling it to give in on all major points and who in so doing, gave invaluable help to the cause of the United Nations. What a long way the Badoglio Government had to travel from the martial law and "no politics" attitude to the recognition of the six parties of the Italian National Front on the Rome radio and in the press. The landmarks on this long road were many; the abolition of

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Fascist institutions and imprisonment of the most prominent Fascists, the recognition of the principles of liberalism, the release of anti-Fascist prisoners, including Socialists and Communists; the recognition of workers' shop committees and the appointment of well-known anti-Fascists to leading Trade Union positions (de Vittorio Niccoletti, Roveda, Buozzi, Achille Grandi).

What is represented by this National Front, which has acquired such influence and power? Six parties are officially represented in it:—

Liberal Reconstruction Party.
Christian Democratic Party.
Party of Action.
Workers Democratic Party.
Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity.
Communist Party.

The National Front is the result of a real political need in the Italian people, but the people who first recognised this need and set out to organise and direct it were a handful of Italian anti-Fascists, most of whom were living illegally in Vichy France. They belonged to the three anti-Fascist groups who had an illegal organisation working inside Italy: the Socialists, Communists and the "Justice and Liberty" representatives who signed the first Manifesto for the Unity of the Italian people in the autumn of 1941. This Manifesto was a great step forward. The people who signed it (and among them there were some who had previously opposed unity but who had been taught a terrible lesson in France) renounced every sectarian and petty controversy amongst themselves. They saw where the main forces and trends of the Italian people are and that these were by no means confined to their own militant groupings inside Italy. These forces were not only to be found among industrial workers and intellectuals, but also among the peasants, who were mostly Catholic, the middle and the lower middle classes, and among the youth also. They saw clearly the necessity for beginning the work of unity at the very base, giving it a strong, solid foundation with their propaganda for common, united Committees of Action in every village, district and town.

Just over a year later, in December, 1942, the National Front was a living reality in Italy, and its representatives gathered illegally in Milan to discuss the situation and the next steps. Liberals and Catholics, as well as members of the Fascist Youth, were there, together with Communists, Socialists and Radicals. Unity had been achieved. The needs of the hour, the fight for peace and independence were unanimously recognised by these men who *represented* the Italian people.

Much information is not available on the composition, programme, etc., of most of these six parties now making up the Italian National Front. The Liberal Reconstruction Party appears to be a grouping of "Left Liberals" representing progressive tendencies among the Italian middle and lower middle class. It has, it appears, traditional links with the Italian Republican Party, which had many points of similarity and practically the same mass basis as the French Radical Party. It seems to be a fairly solid and responsible group. Gasparotto is one of the leaders. It seems that old Liberals like Orlando, Croce, Einaudi, men personally respected and on the whole unstained by Fascism, but who never had much contact with the mass of the people and whom Badoglio tried at the beginning to use to split up the National Front and give a façade to his government, do not, it appears, belong to this Liberal Reconstruction Party.

Another Liberal Group is that of the "Party of Action." This group, which appears to be of very recent origin, has taken up a programme which is reminiscent of "Justice and Liberty" from the social angle. Among the men mentioned as belonging to it in Italy is Vinciguerra, a liberal writer tried and imprisoned by Fascist courts. He was a Monarchist then, but there is evidence that his experiences have somewhat modified his outlook on

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this point. There is no evidence as to the solidity of this party nor is it exactly known what it represents, neither what its relations are to individuals in the Italian emigration. Certainly it cannot be divided from the other Liberals by differences on the subject of the Monarchy. Republican tendencies have always been strong in the Italian middle and lower middle class, and the role of the monarchy from 1922 onwards has certainly not strengthened any monarchist feeling.

The Christian Democratic Party clearly has a solid mass foundation among the peasantry and the appointment of Achille Grandi as Commissioner of the Peasants' Confederation confirms this. This party is clearly the heir of the 'Partito Popolare' founded by don Sturzo after the last war, and which found great support amongst the peasants. Its programme on the land problem (one of the most important problems in Italy) reflects the deep and fundamental aspirations of the landless Italian peasantry to ownership of land, or to put it more correctly, to the right to the produce of their own labours. The relationship between this party and the Vatican, as well as the Catholic Action "groups" controlled and directed by the Vatican, is likely to be a delicate one. It is a great achievement that such a progressive Catholic party should exist and that it should collaborate in the National Front.

The Workers Democratic Party and the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity are both Socialist parties linked with the tradition of the Italian Socialist Party. The Workers Democratic Party appears definitely as the larger and more solid group of the two, and more closely linked with the Socialist Party. (B. Buozzi, the present Commissioner of the Industrial Workers Confederation, belongs to it and so apparently does Pietro Nenni, who was one of the more prominent organisers of the Garibaldi Brigade). Many reasons can be found for the abandoning of the name "Socialist" in the title of this party. One of these may be the desire not to be mixed up with all sorts of shady groups of disrupters, agents provocateur, etc., outside Italy calling themselves the "Italian Socialist Party." A further reason may be to check any "leftist" tendencies ("Socialism or nothing") among the old Italian Socialists in Italy. Disrupters and Leftists seem, on the other hand, to have more influence in the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity. But the very fact that this group is in the National Front means that in the present situation disrupters and diversionists have not an easy job.

The Italian National Front has developed now into a force which groups, leads and influences the great majority of the Italian people around a simple, clear-cut programme of peace and friendship with the Allies—now achieved—and freedom. Now undoubtedly the first aim on the programme is the struggle against the Germans. The strength and solidarity of the various trends in the National Front grew out of the struggle.

The collapse of Mussolini's regime did not catch them unprepared. They dealt with a difficult problem—their relationship with the Badoglio Government—extremely well, so far as can be judged, avoiding the pitfalls of leftism without becoming entangled in the Badoglio intrigues. They saluted the overthrow of Mussolini but ignored the martial law decrees; they put terriffic pressure upon Badoglio when it became clear that he had no intention of securing immediate peace; and Badoglio had to yield to their pressure always in the hope of splitting them by his concessions. They avoided this pitfall too, and at the time of the unconditional surrender the Badoglio Government had become so weak that it had to advertise the fact that unconditional surrender was enthusiastically approved by the National Front. At the same time it must be recognised that the Badoglio Government could only remain in power by giving conclusive evidence to the leaders of this broad movement that (1) it was actually dealing with the United Nations and that

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therefore any active opposition or sabotage of its efforts would only help the Germans; (2) it was prepared to recognise the conquests of the National Front in the field of political freedom and workers organisations. There is no doubt that had they had any moral support and clear guarantee from outside the situation might have developed with even greater rapidity inside Italy. Even so one could feel the power of the National Front growing day by day, embracing not only workers in Northern Italy, but also peasants, intellectuals, middle-classes; not only the soldiers who refused to fire on civilians, but also their officers.

The United Nations have a debt to those Italian Catholics, Liberals, Communists and Socialists who, unaided and often misrepresented, carried on the struggle against Fascism for twenty years, and who to-day are ready to challenge the German invaders. It cannot be said that Great Britain and the United States, through their responsible Governments, have in any way, as yet, recognised this moral obligation, nor shown that solidarity which should bind all those who are fighting Nazi-Fascism. This delay will be paid for by the blood of many of the best sons of the Italian people. It will also be paid for by the blood of British and American youth. What has been lost in the past must be made good to-day. The Italian National Front calls Britain!

Bring in the Technicians

by WILLIAM BOYLE

National President, Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen

[*Mr. Boyle has written from the standpoint of the Draughtsmen's Association: but we have reason to think that the views expressed would apply also to Scientific Workers and other sections not yet included in the Joint Production Committees.*—ED. L.M.]

THE present stage of the war, with its need for increased production, demands continuous improvement of the machinery of co-operation in engineering and kindred trades, viz.: the Works' Joint Production Committees (and now Yard Committees) which are a counterpart to the collaboration of Unions and Employers in the National Production Advisory Council; and at intermediate levels, the Regional Boards and District Committees. This machinery, like any other, requires a prime mover and efficient lubrication to keep it in motion: the determined will of its participants provides the first, and their enthusiasm and mutual trust, the second, of these conditions. Where these prerequisites exist, overwhelming evidence from government, employers and workers testifies to the actual achievement of greatly increased production thus effected. This makes all the more deplorable those cases where no such machinery has been set up, or where the existing machinery is allowed either to lag or rust. Such dangerous gaps in the national effort must be closed immediately.

The lack of determined will is often due to the suspicious attitude of some employers and some workers to these committees. In the case of the more backward employers a "hangover" from traditional resentment of workers' "encroachment" and criticism in the "sphere of management" induces a tendency to limit the committees' functions to combatting absenteeism and, in extreme instances, to resist the formation of committees by withholding co-operation, facilities, or publicity in the factory. In other cases managements are prevented by peacetime restrictive glut-fearing prejudices from adequately handling insatiable wartime demands. A correspondingly negative approach prevails with backward

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workers who have a bad "hangover" from the depressed days of unemployment and the traditional fear that speedier production means speedier unemployment. This negative approach is further aggravated where the J.P.Cs. are distorted into absenteeism committees. Between these extreme impediments are a host of smaller frictions in the machine such as imperfect mutual understanding between the worker and management sides, due to faulty operation in drawing up, circulating and checking of agenda, decisions, etc.

There is, however, a most important and most overlooked component lacking from the machine. This is the amazing exclusion of technical workers' trade unions from the list of unions entitled to election to the Workers' Side of the Works Joint Production Committees. National awareness of this omission has been obscured because the work of draughtsmen, scientific personnel and other technical and administrative non-manual workers is not as visible to the public eye as it is vital behind the scenes.

It must seem incredible to those with knowledge of the modern engineering industry that engineering draughtsmen, for example, the makers of blue prints, the designers of machinery and of production jigs and tools, are still at this late date prevented by the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation from sitting on the Workers' Side of the Committee. The Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen—the largest technical workers' union in this country with a membership of 35,000—regards it as a solemn responsibility to the national effort to insist that its members be accorded the same right as manual workers. The other technical unions are equally serious in their demands to participate. We know that the full potentialities of these committees cannot be realised while technicians are excluded from a place alongside other workers. The shop workers are also well aware of this. The Amalgamated Engineering Union is keen that we should take our place as trade unionists, on their side. None know better than men who use blue prints on the actual job how necessary is complete liaison with the draughtsmen who design them. This also holds for other indispensable preliminary technical work and workers. It must be faced that our absence from the Workers' Side has a threefold pernicious effect on the functioning of Committees: (1) At best the shop workers feel that the lack of equal approach prevents the maximum scope of workers' suggestions on all phases of activities inside the concern. (2) Shop workers who are aware of the employers' exclusion of technical workers, feel that the employers' attitude is not wholehearted towards the Committee. This encourages apathy among the workers. (3) Technicians resent their exclusion and subconsciously adopt an attitude of detachment to the committees, and tend to feel frustrated in their desire to give unbiased contribution to the cause of production.

The attitude of the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation to this vital question is that a draughtsman could sit on the Works Joint Production Committee only as a representative and nominee of the management. Apart from the objectionable patronising aspect, this practice hinders unhampered expression and initiative on the part of the draughtsmen and presents the latter to the Workers' Side in the light of a "superior."

The Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen contend that the management is able to appoint a chief draughtsman to the Managerial Side of the Committee, but that the draughtsmen should be able to appoint their own representative to the Workers' Side. The employers' attitude obstructs the development of that liaison between the technical and practical side of the industry at every level, and creates the impression among both the technical and shop workers that their attitude is influenced by prejudice against the mixing of hand and brain

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workers, thus preventing the development of full harmony, which is so essential to the war effort. In these democratic days, when manual and non-manual worker are co-operating in the Army, Home Guard, A.R.P. and Fire Guard, they cannot see why they should not also be together in such a vital sphere of war work. The distinction between "dungaree" and "white-collar" is rapidly losing any meaning to-day.

Apart from the above considerations, the continued exclusion of the technical workers from the Works Production Committees (Workers' Side) is utterly contradictory to the regional and district practice. Draughtsmen members of the A.E.S.D. sit on the District Committees of the Regional Production Board and on the Trade Unions Production District Committees. It is obvious that if they are valuable at these central points of joint consultation, it is illogical to prohibit them at the local points. Further proof of the indefensibility of their exclusion is that in those few cases where draughtsmen are permitted by progressive managements to sit on the Workers' Side as co-opted members (under the agreement that co-option of any worker is possible if both Sides concur), they are admittedly filling a long-felt need. In one firm where the chief draughtsman sits on the Managerial Side and a draughtsman on the Workers' Side, an example of successful co-operation is provided. Co-option, however excellent, is too rare and fortuitous and is no substitute for our equal recognition with other workers: indeed, it only serves to underline our case.

The best tribute to our cause is the increasing frequency of the shop workers' demand for our full participation alongside them. As a member of a Trade Unions Production District Committee which has held conferences with representatives from the Works Joint Production Committees in the District, it is interesting to observe the delegates from these committees repeatedly voicing their desire that technical and administrative workers, particularly draughtsmen, be eligible for election to the Workers' Side of the committees. They know that drawing offices are the nerve centres of the engineering industry, and that full collaboration between draughtsmen and shop workers will result in mutual instruction and modification of design and methods which can save many valuable man-hours both in workshop and office, and bring about the maximum deployment of all our potential strength. Manual workers do not always know that they can considerably assist the winning of equal rights on the committees for technical workers by continually pressing inside the committees for their co-option on every possible production problem. Shop Stewards and drawing office committees can also usefully contact each other even outside the Joint Production Committees for consultation on any methods to improve production, and incidentally to obtain a better mutual understanding. The united strength which the workers by hand and brain show to-day in providing the power through the increased production obtained by these Joint Production Committees to beat the enemy on the field of battle, will also be the strength which will demonstrate their right to a say in the planning which can start only after the battle for freedom is won.

NOTE TO READERS.

The map of "The Indian Provinces and States since 1937" printed on the back cover of our pamphlet *Pakistan and Indian National Unity* by G. M. Adhikari, is a reproduction of the map in Professor R. Coupland's *Indian Politics*, published this year by the Oxford University Press (Sir Humphrey Milford, publisher), to both of whom acknowledgment is due.

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Famine in India

by V. K. KRISHNA MENON

"127 *people have been found in a state of collapse in the streets of Calcutta. All were removed to hospital, where* 12 *died. The cause of collapse is said to be starvation or sickness.*"—The Times, August 19, 1943.

Measures have been taken for the quick removal of corpses from the streets, and for the prompt treatment in hospital of men found in a state of collapse through starvation or sickness.—Reuter Message from Calcutta, August 22, 1943.

THE resolution on India passed by the Trades Union Congress at Southport voices the grave and growing concern of the British labour movement about the disastrous political and economic situation in India. The ending of the deadlock, steps to relieve the famine, the release of the prisoners, a national government now—these are the demands set forth in the decision of the Trade Unions.

These same demands have been made by Indian leaders, Liberals, Communists, non-party men, and by Hindu, Moslem and Christian associations. They see India heavily endangered by political conflict and dreadful famine conditions. The restoration of national leadership to the people is proclaimed by them as a necessity for India's survival, and for the reinforcement of her strength and for the cause of the United Nations.

The famine in India is inadequately recognised abroad—it is the worst in her history. Early this year, when great parts of India had become famine-stricken, Mr. Amery stated that there was no famine in India. The situation was allowed to drift from bad to worse.

This grave situation is at its worst in the provinces of Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and Assam, nearest to the India-Japan front.

The British-owned *Statesman* (of Calcutta) characterises the situation as "an all-India disgrace" and says:—

Thoughtful Britons in India realise that as long as the British Parliament and Secretary of State retain responsibility for India's welfare the blame unavoidably rests on them.

Food prices in India have risen by 300 to 1,200 per cent. At controlled prices, which are between three and seven times above the pre-war level, food is unobtainable for the common people. Rice, the cheapest grain, is available to the bulk of the people in Malabar or Bengal only to the extent often of one-tenth or even one-twentieth of pre-war quantities. Food queus are a normal feature in many parts of India.

What are the causes?

The muddle and callousness of transport policy to some extent prevents the mobility of food stocks, but the main factor is the inefficiency of the administration and the incapacity of the Central Government to function as an All-India Government. Nowhere more than here is the necessity of a truly National Government proclaimed so forcefully by grim economic conditions. The only time that the Linlithgow government functioned as an All-India power, acted with earnestness and a sense of urgency, swept away red tape and disregarded provincialisms and punctilio, was when it rounded up its political opponents and forged the present deadlock. It continues to use these powers for maintaining the deadlock. When it comes to feeding the people, it is, in fact, incapable of action. Its provincial agents (British) do not respond. Here is the plaintive cry of an Indian member of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Aziz Huq, who recently had to hand over his Food portfolio to Sir J. Strivasta, a big landlord and millowner from the United Provinces. Reporting the Central Legislative Assembly, the *Observer* correspondent cabled (August 21) from Kalimpong:—

The Indian problem is rapidly assuming a concentrated form expressible in the four letters F O O D. Debates in the Central legislature are considered to have revealed a breakdown of authority and initiative.

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He goes on to say that Sir Aziz "explained to the Assembly how governments of provinces successfully sabotage arrangements for their surpluses to the starving provinces in Eastern India." These provinces, as the same correspondent points out, are, in the main, administered by British Governors, all of whom are supposed to be actively promoting the war effort in harmony with the Central Government. The correspondent adds that public opinion in the provinces, including European opinion expressed by European groups in the legislatures and the *Statesman*, blames the Central Government, which is "accused of lack of foresight followed by weakness." These critics say that "constitutional propriety" towards the Provinces is made the excuse for failure to exercise control and do no more than "denounce hoarders and call incessantly for public support, which it has not got; and that conscious of its action against Congress having "strained its popularity," the Central Government is "anxious to show itself conciliatory in other directions." These "directions" happen to be those of vested interests, reactionaries, sycophants, and other anti-social elements.

Food is exported from India even to-day. The demand for its stoppage is now more than a year old. At the same time, not only is there little increase in production, but the offer and prospects of large imports is disregarded.

It is ridiculous to argue that there is plenty of food, and there is too much money in the hands of the people (as the Government does) and that this is the reason for the famine! Yet Bengal, it is now officially admitted, has a deficiency of one and a half million tons of rice. If there is a slight All-India increase in food production to-day over the previous decade, there is an increase of population by fifty millions, vast distress through flood and cyclone, and inroads into the national granary by war needs.

Hoarding cannot be checked by shooting a few "looters" at sight, as the magistrate of Nasik was authorised to do. "Looters" are, at any rate, not the hoarders. Nor are the hoarders that really cause panic and famine the small petty shopkeepers, nor the small peasant or householder. The Government refuses to operate against the combines and the landlords.

Hoarding by consumers can only be stopped when there is national leadership in the Government. The most potent check on hoarding is public confidence. If provincial governments, as indicated by the *Observer's* correspondents, are themselves parochial and capable of "sabotage," it is not surprising that small men should think of the next meal, or even of making some profit. The unity committees, set up largely under the inspiration of the Communists, Trade Unionists and Congressmen who are free, have broken down all political barriers and pointed out the way to a National Government.

The latest performance of the Government is the announcement that the present rise in prices is due to lack of saving, to too much money, that conditions will be worse if the peasants do not save. So it proposes to launch through its officials and non-official supporters a campaign to collect in savings alone some 200 crores of rupees from the Indian peasant out of his augmented income for war savings. This is just an exaction and will be accompanied by the usual cruelty and corruption of officials in India. It is a cruel remedy to pose before a starving population.

These and other causes have created a condition where people in some parts, as a *Daily Express* correspondent pointed out, are eating locusts and leaves, and there is a total of 125 million starving people in India. In Malabar in some areas people are reduced to eating young grass. A Conservative member of Parliament, Mr. Nicholson told Mr. Amery (August 15) in the House of Commons that in Bengal thousands of people were

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eating off garbage heaps. There are tens of thousands of destitutes in every city, homeless, foodless and almost unclothed. Against them the Government is increasingly operating the vagrancy laws.

This situation must end. There must be a stoppage of Indian exports, control of stocks, vigorous action against hoarders, British or Indian. More shipping must be made available for India's food supplies at once and there must be State purchases internally and externally. The policy of imposing greater burdens on the peasantry by forced loans and exactions must stop. War expenditure and supplies must be augmented and reinforced, not by the present policy of plunder and loot, but by national organisation and popular support. This, and not grandiose schemes on paper, which can hardly become operative, is the way to remedy famine in India.

The deadlock is thus not only a political issue; its ending is an urgent necessity to rescue the people of India from hunger and death, to build up Indian resistance, to counter the decay of morale and defeatism. The restoration to the Indian people of their leaders by the release of the political prisoners, the reversal of the present policy by opening of negotiations, the abandonment once and for all of plunder policies in India's economy and the honest pursuit of ways and means to establish national co-operation must be demanded by the people of Britain.

The T.U.C. resolution makes these demands. They must become effective immediately. For they are urgent and imperative necessities.

Australian Labour Victory

by BELL KEATS

THE recent election results in Australia constitute the greatest electoral victory ever won by Australian Labour. On dissolution the position of the Parties was as follows: Labour Party, 36; Oppostition 36 (made up of United Australia Party, representing Australian finance-capital, 23 seats; Country Party, representing big agrarian interests, 13); Independents, 2. The swing towards Labour has been overwhelming. The full results have not yet been published, but figures so far give Labour 48 seats, U.A.P. 16, Country Party 8, Independents 2. The most striking results come from South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, the three smallest and least industrialised States, where probably 15 out of 16 seats will go to Labour, who held only 5 in the previous House.

Perhaps even more striking are the Senate results. Here, for the first time in twenty years, Labour has won a majority. There are 36 seats in the Senate. Half of them go up for re-election every three years. This time there were 19 seats to be re-elected, as one of the seats was filled in 1942 through an emergency caused by death. Labour has won the whole 19, and now has 22 out of 36 seats in the Senate. Its majority is therefore assured for six years.

The reasons for this great Labour victory can only be understood on the basis of the big changes that war has made in Australia. Australia entered the war with no motor industry, no aircraft industry, no machine tool industry, and very little steel or shipbuilding. In 1939 there were 4 munition factories; to-day there are 49, and 170 annexes. In 1939 there were 5 firms producing machine tools; to-day there are 75. To-day Australia is producing combat aircraft, including engines, and also 9,000 ton cargo steamers. Engineering developments are very striking. For example, Vickers' predictors, amongst the most complicated high precision instruments of modern warfare, are being made at Australia's "Woolwich Arsenal." The *Times* correspondent

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(1.6.43) reports that in all the factories he visited he was "impressed by the number of Australian-made machines, many of them large and complicated, working side by side with imported British and American machines." In tank production, Australia claims to lead the world in casting hulls and tank-turrets in solid pieces, thus eliminating much riveting and welding. Although half the machinery used is imported, it is claimed that there are few machines which Australia cannot now build if necessary.

These big industrial developments have increased the army of Australian workers. By the end of 1942 there were 505,000 workers employed in Governmental and semi-Governmental munition factories, shipyard, aircraft plants, etc., as against 13,500 in December, 1941. Out of a male population of 2,500,000 between the ages of 14 and 65, there are 1,500,000 in services or war work. The drift into industry, and the calls of the services, have given a new outlook and horizon to thousands of Australian men and women, formerly tied to the home, or limited in experience through living in rural districts. It is estimated that 150,000 men have left the land since the outbreak of war.

An equally important result of this industrialisation is that it has laid the basis for a stronger, more unified and more independent Australian nation. Australia was no colony when the war began. She was a secondary imperialist power. But she was also in the peculiar position of being a country whose national development had been stunted and restricted by a number of internal and external factors. It has been the historic task of the Australian Labour Party, as Lenin foresaw so brilliantly thirty years ago, to "concern itself with developing and strengthening the country and with creating a central Government." Since taking office, Labour has ratified the Statute of Westminster, introducing proposals to centralise more power in the hands of the Federal Government, developed the Australian diplomatic service, began to create a modern Merchant Navy, and is proposing to introduce a standard railway gauge to link up the east and west of the continent.

This development of the Australian nation has been hastened by the war. The war had exposed Australia's weaknesses—lack of industrial base, lack of unification, underdevelopment of existing resources, smallness of population, etc. The needs of the war placed on the order of the day the task of mobilising and developing all the resources of Australia and her people Sectional interests and conflicts, and class limitations, had prevented the U.A.P.-Country Party alliance from carrying out this task. It has been the historic role of Labour to carry the Australian nation forward to its present position.

When the Labour Party took office it found the country ill-prepared for war. The former Prime Minister Menzies, owing to his long-practiced appeasement towards Japan, had placed Australia in danger. Menzies had been an outspoken supporter of Munich: and had done little for national defence. The Labour Party, backed by the determination of the Australian people to fight Fascism with all they had, quickly mobilised the country, rigorously curtailed luxuries, expanded the scope of operations for the militia, drew more men and women into industry, encouraged joint-production committees, and placed the country on a complete war footing. Much still remains to be done. But in two years the Australian Labour Government, strongly backed by the working-class, had shown its ability to mobilise Australia for war against Fascism.

By contrast the U.A.P.-Country Party alliance, not only showed themselves to be incapable of organising the country for war. They also showed themselves to be unwilling to solve the problems of the people, or to allow them to strengthen the nation's defence by their democratic participation in all aspects of war work. In opposition, they have constantly attacked the Government, making full use of their

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majority in the Senate to delay and water down all the Government's measures. They opposed the Militia Bill, the Welfare Bill and the Repatriation Bill. They called for votes of no-confidence in the Government. Their constant sabotage of the war effort by this activity became such a hindrance that Labour appealed to the country for a strengthened mandate.

The issues involved in the elections were three-fold. The Australian people saw it as a question of returning to office a Party that would mobilise the nation for war, defend the daily interests of the people, and guarantee their social and economic advance after the war. The Labour Party, in its two years of office, had shown that, backed by the drive of the working-class, it could carry out these tasks. The Australian people fully realised this and gave Labour its great majority.

The Australian Communist Party, which has had a remarkable growth in the past two years, gave active support to the Labour Party in these elections. Its 20,000 members, most of whom are in industry, have worked to rally the Australian people behind the Curtin Government and to expose the reactionary manoeuvres of Menzies; and Fadden, who had displaced Menzies as leader of the opposition. Fadden's election "promise" that he would re-impose the ban on the Australian Communist Party, proved a boomerang. Australians are too politically aware to allow themselves to be fooled by this red-baiting. They gave their reply to Fadden by returning Labour to office, and giving 75,000 votes to the few Communist candidates who stood.* The same political acumen enabled Australia to see through the Opposition slogan of a "National Government," which, in the present conditions in Australia, is only a veil for smuggling back the Munichеers and other reactionary elements into the Government.

The victory of Labour in Australia shows that the people are determined that Fascism will be destroyed root and branch. No less is it a pointer that there will be no return to 1939. From the blood, toil, tears and sweat of this war the people, enriched by their experience, will turn to build a new Australia that will occupy a proud place in the brotherhood of nations.

* Under the preferential vote operating in Australia, it was possible for the Communist Party, while supporting the Labour Government, to put forward its own candidates in certain constituencies.

Publications Received

Books

The Rebirth of Christianity by Stanley Cook (Pelican, 9*d*, 218 pp.).
An Anthology of War Poetry edited by Julian Symons (Pelican, 9*d*, 190 pp.).
Is Christ Divided? edited by The Archbishop of Canterbury (Penguin Special, 9*d*, 128 pp.).
Young Citizen by A. E. Morgan (Penguin Special, 9*d*, 192 pp.).
What About Business? by John Gloag (Penguin Special, 9*d*, 96 pp.).

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary provision must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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LABOUR MONTHLY GUARANTEE FUND

Amount received in September, 1943 : £82 : 12 : 6

GUARANTEE OR DEVELOPMENT?

A reader writes: "Stubbornly, but respectfully, I cling to 'Development Fund.' A small point, no doubt, but I know of no other magazine that has contributed so much to the Development of political understanding than the L.M. My own contribution is primarily a contribution towards my own Development and the Development of my contacts." Although he is looking at the matter subjectively, he is nevertheless quite right. The Fund should be such a contribution, and we only wish more of our readers could be led to realise this. But, and now *we* are looking at the matter realistically, the Fund must in the present situation of reduced turnover due to reduced paper supplies—it must, we repeat—be used to supplement our income from sales of the paper, and to avoid at all costs the bugbear of an overdraft.

We are well up this month in comparison with last; but still the needed £100 has not been reached. We ask our readers, individually and collectively, to form themselves into pillars of financial strength, as LABOUR MONTHLY assists them to become pillars of political strength, and give us the help we need.

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